

State, but the names and ages of property he wants to perpetuate, that even if we should ninety or a hundred years hence knock at the doors of Congress, we may get a little compensation. I think there has been a little change upon that subject.

I think there has been a little change in another respect. I have heard gentlemen who were once very loud in extolling Jeff. Davis, and expressing their sympathy with the rebellion; and some of these very gentlemen would give almost anything to-day to get back the old Union just as it was. I believe many of them, if it were proposed now to have the Union back with slavery, as was proposed by the President even up to 1863, they would jump at it rather than go on with the fighting, in the utter hopelessness of their cause as it now presents itself. At that time they spurned the offer of the President and threw it back in his teeth, in the sure expectation that they would achieve their independence, and southern rights would be established; especially as one southern man was equal to five northern men in a fight at any time.

Gentlemen have changed a good deal in these respects—gentlemen of the minority too; and therefore, although we have changed, and I admit it, it is because the state of the war and the state of the country present a very different aspect now from what they did when the rebellion commenced.

President Lincoln is charged with being tyrannical, for that is the point at issue, and the government is charged with being tyrannical. President Lincoln is charged with having changed his position, and having asserted new things which he did not assert in the beginning, and being for the enforcement of things now which it would not enforce in the beginning. We say that every offer that was made in the beginning to these people was indignantly refused; and there was no resource left to preserve the life of the nation, but that the President should push forward and avail himself of every power given to him. After having made offer after offer, proposal after proposal, and all refused, he was obliged to take a course which if not strictly laid down in the letter of the constitution was given to him in its implied provisions.

I shall vote for this amendment because I do not want men to be office-holders or voters in Maryland unless they are willing to subscribe to that. I look upon this as the only proposition which will secure and preserve the purity of our government in this State, and keep it loyal to the government. I say that no man who sympathizes with or wishes the success of the southern confederacy in their rebellion against these United States is fit to be trusted with high places or the management of high offices.

Mr. DENT. I do not feel prepared at all, to give my views upon the grave questions

under consideration—for they are grave questions, seriously grave—which have been discussed to-day. Although the question properly under discussion, relates to the oath which it is intended to impose upon office holders, under the constitution which is now in the course of preparation, the discussion has taken a wide range; and almost necessarily so, from the fact that the oath itself is so vast in its proportions as to embrace the whole political administration of the present federal power. This is a sufficient excuse for the scope of debate and the wide range the discussion has taken.

The oaths which have been proposed, look not merely to that which is to come, or the present; but look back to the past. They provide that you shall purge yourself, if you have ever been guilty of any disloyalty, or of any breach of duty towards the federal government. No; you cannot purge yourself by the oath. If you have had sympathies with the party that is struggling against the government for what they conceive to be their State rights, you are forbidden to take office. That is the past. No matter what change may have taken place in your views since. No matter how different the views you now entertain from those you entertained in the beginning of the war, when the struggle first began, when gentlemen upon this floor, who are now so fierce in their denunciation of the rebellion, and so free in their defence of the administration, did not hide their sympathies with those in rebellion from the public; but gave free expression to them, as is well known. On frequent occasions, publicly and privately, it is well known that the late governor of your State expressed his sympathies with the South. How could he then take that oath? Is he capable of taking an office under the constitution which you propose to make, and under the oath proposed by the amendment of the gentleman from Cecil (Mr. Scott)?—for I am now speaking of that rather than of the amendment to it, by the gentleman from Baltimore (Mr. Stirling.) How many gentlemen who may be to-day most loyal, excessively loyal, may be excluded from office because of their antecedents, in the earlier stages of this struggle between the United States, or the adhering States more properly, and the seceded States. Under this oath it is proposed to exclude them all, notwithstanding they may be as earnest in their support of the government as now administered, as any other gentleman who never had any sympathies with the rebellion against the government.

This is *ex post facto*. In my opinion it is contrary to the principles of the constitution of the United States. It is a penalty. You propose to disfranchise a citizen of the State, to punish an act committed before the passage of your law. You provide an oath and require it to be taken by one who is elected